

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 18, 1877, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel G. Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 10 East 14th. St.,
Wednesday, April 18th, 1877. My dear Alec:

Your short note came this morning. With all due politeness, allow me to say it was not worth the postage! Still I was glad to hear from you, and very glad to know the reason of your not writing before. I am always disappointed when a day passes without a letter, but very thankful for it if the next day brings word that you spent the time resting. I wrote you yesterday you might write letters on Sundays. Don't abuse my permission, you must not write more than three hours at the most — I prefer only one.

Do you realize that the sole hope of our being married this autumn lies in your keeping well and being able to work. If you are unable to use this time I do not see how you can get enough money to marry for years. I know you have set your heart on being married this year, but how can you do it with all the will and determination in the world if you have not the physical strength. Even if you manage to wear along through the summer is it right and fair to me to throw upon me the burden of caring for a broken down men. Of course I should risk all the more to marry you, still it is not right on your part. How can you, even if you had the strength of Hercules expect to work on uninjured without proper food and sleep? How don't you go and think Mamma or some one else has been preaching to me, this is my sole and only composition.

I have been working hard marking one of my big table napkins. I am quite proud of my work, though I have no doubt you would think it a vast amount of labor thrown away. Mamma has been busy over my 2 dresses, and we have about decided how we shall have one trimmed. Mamma thinks I had better let you go it would save so much trouble. Is there any one in particular who you would like to marry us. We were talking about it today

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in fun, and Auntie told me a story of a couple who were strangers in Massachusetts and who wanted to be married by the lady's own clergymen who lived in New Jersey. They did not know the law forbids all marriages by any but resident ministers, and the gentleman only found it out at the last minute. He spoke to Senator Dawes then a Notary Public or some such officer in the place. He told them to go on and he would see to it. Just when the minister pronounced, In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost I pronounce you man and wife, Mr. Dawes stepped forward, and softly so only a few could hear, said "In the name of the Commonwealth of Mass. I pronounce you man and wife" so the marriage was legal, and only the necessary witnesses knew that it was civil as well and religious.

No notice in the papers about a certain important person! The Commercial Advertiser wishes Manager Swachosh would rig up some kind of transatlantic telephone by which they could hear the sounds of the coming European war. That war has been so often announced and never yet come, I begin to despair of seeing it in my lifetime. I faithfully read all scraps of notices I can find about it, but there is little, I don't think we Americans care much more about the war than you European did about ours, except so far as it will be to our pecuniary advantage or disadvantage. I don't see what extraordinary selfishness there is in it, did not you look at our war same way. Yet ours was for a much higher, holier purpose than this. True Russia pleads the cause of the persecuted christians, but are her own 3 subjects any better off, and as for England the only reason that will induce her to take any active part in the war will be the fear of losing control of the sea, where she has no natural right. But never mind what I say. Theoretically I may hate the "Britishers," practically I have read too many British novels, histories and newspapers not to feel a great deal of sympathy and interest in England and her affairs. But indeed I don't think the telegraphic dispatches are at all interesting. I wish I had my dear old "Daily News" the paper that used to give us such long interesting accounts of the Franco-German war when we were nestled in our snug little Dresden homes. Christian Strasse 19 III and 1. You have never been there have you. Mamma says she wishes she knew for certain if you intended

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to make the "grand tour" with Telephone under your arm, if so all the outfit I shall need will be waterproof umbrella and rubbers it will be much less trouble for her.

I am not sure if you will think this letter worth the postage, it is the best I can manufacture this close rainy day. We have such bright nice letters from Papa, they show a, to me, entirely new side of his character, I had no idea he could be sentimental over the beautiful country and glorious air. But what a terrible thing our war must have been when the country is only just beginning after twelve years, to recover from it's effects. His last letter was dated April 15th., 30 miles west of Jacksonville, on the way to Montgomery, Alabama and New Orleans. He expects to be in Washington the 24th or 25th.

Now I must go and finish marking my napkin, it bears my initials M.G.H. in running letters an inch tall and worked in red cotton. I am going to mark all my table linen, this way if I have patience.

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I designed the grouping of the letters myself. Are you not proud of me. I'm afraid honesty will compel "No" for an answer.

Goodbye my love, Ever yours, Mabel.